

STAR WARS™

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STAR WARS™

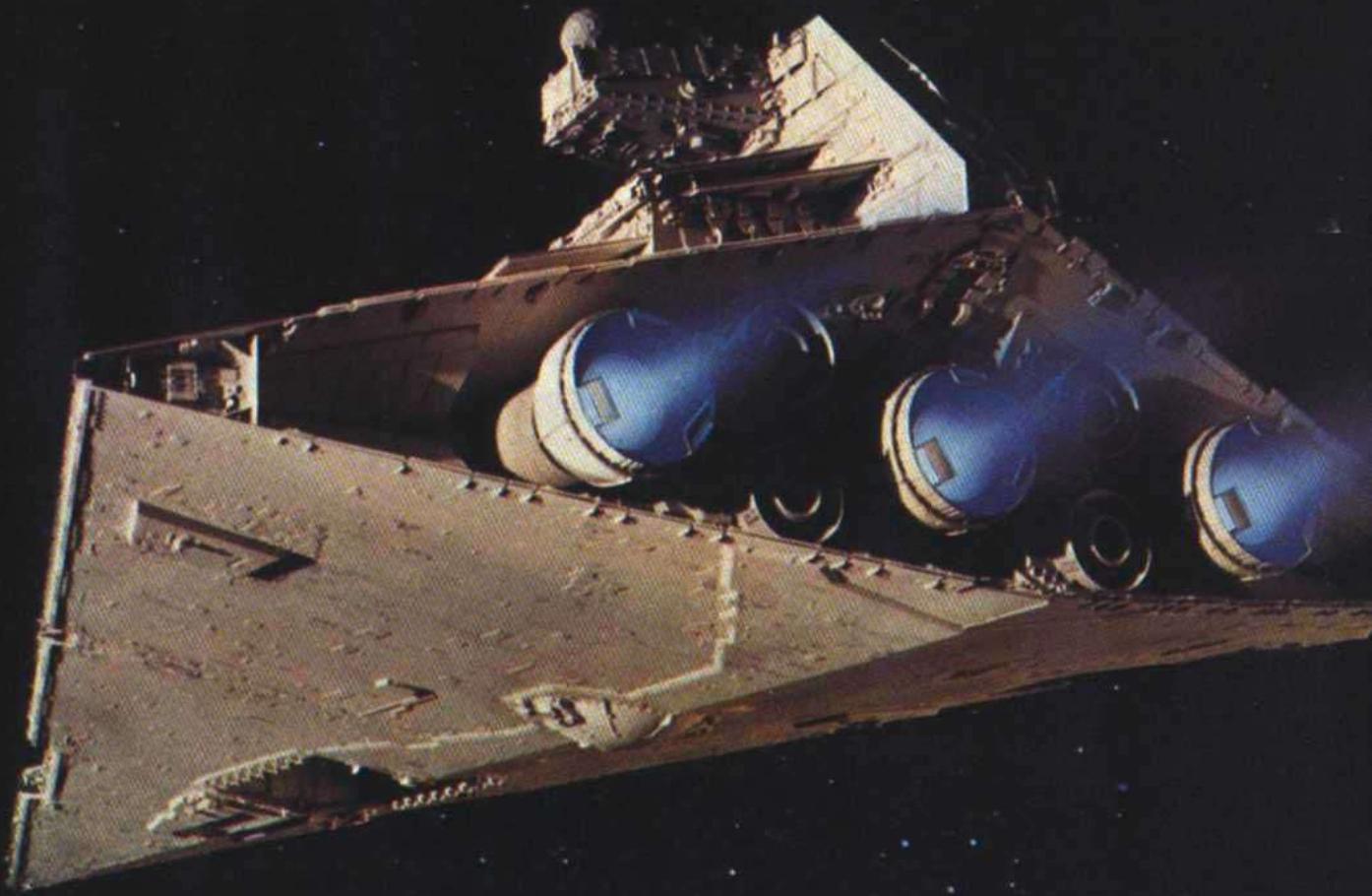


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This is the story of **STAR WARS**.
You can read along with me
in your book. You will know it is
time to turn the page when you
hear Artoo-Deetoo beep like this...

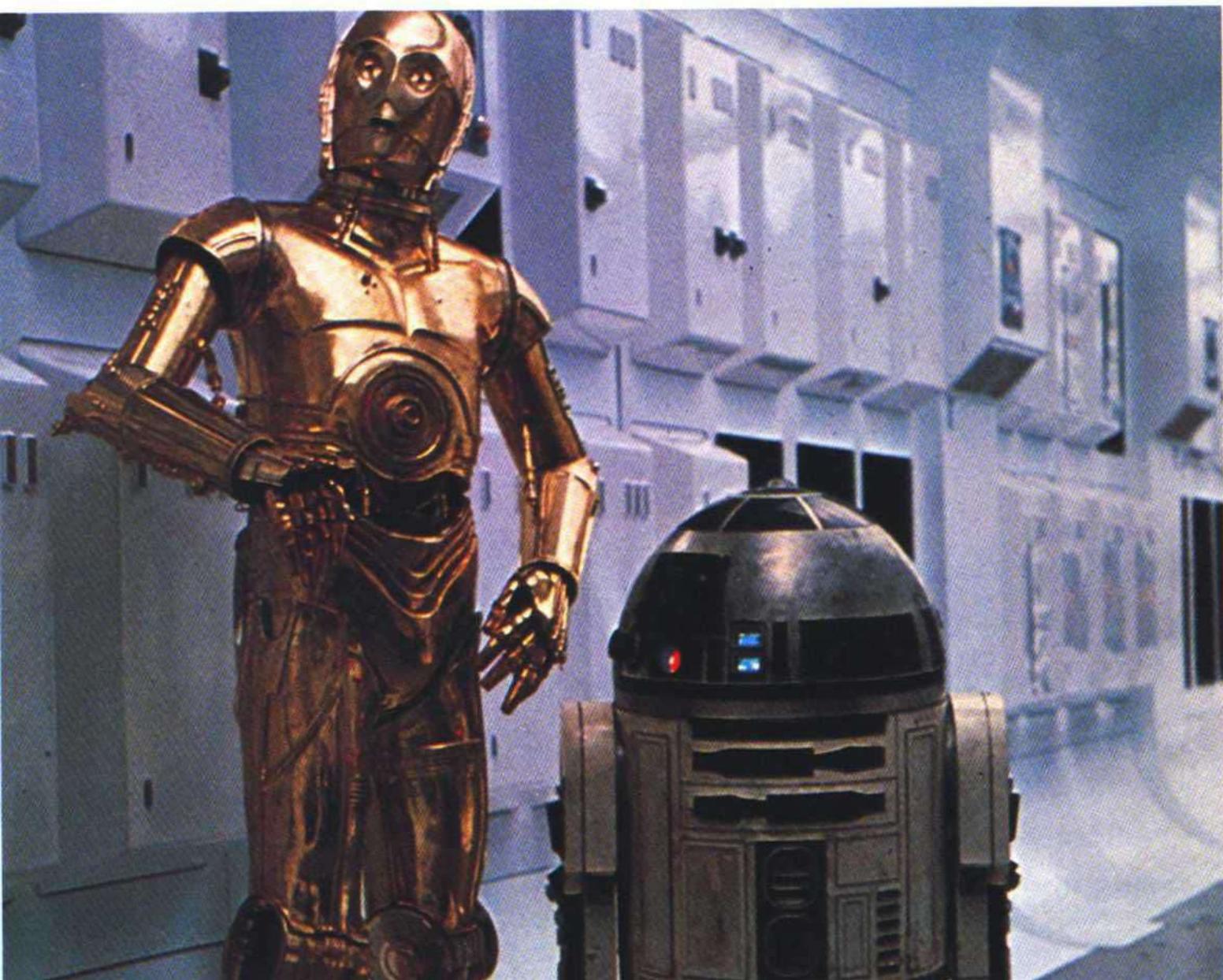
LET'S BEGIN NOW:

**A LONG TIME AGO IN A
GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...**



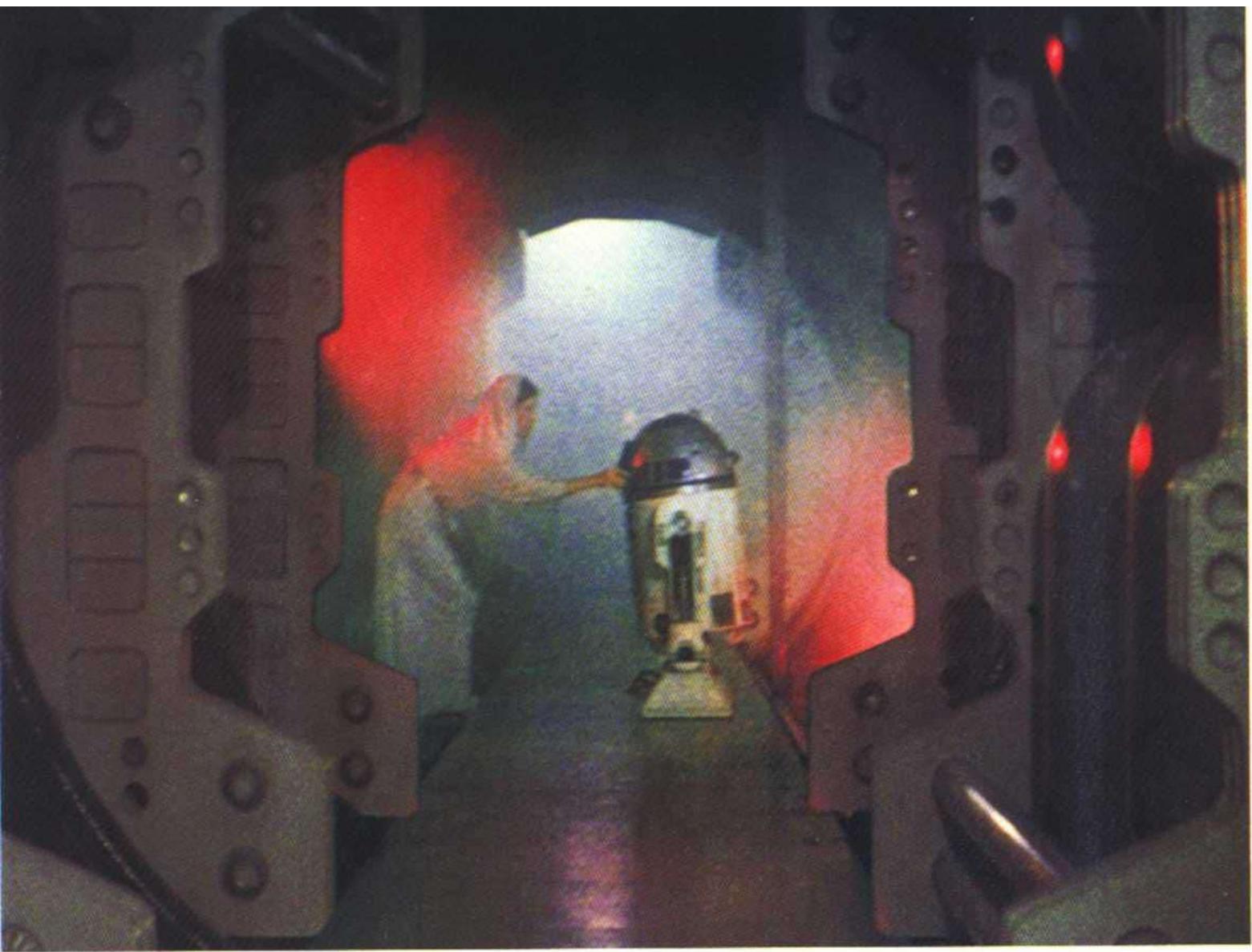
...the hope of freedom was kept alive by Rebel forces fighting against the evil Galactic Empire. In a daring raid, Rebel spies managed to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon—the Death Star! But as the Rebels raced back to their base, they were pursued by a powerful Imperial starship.

On board the small Rebel craft, two droid units were knocked about as deadly laser bolts exploded outside. See-Threepio, the taller, humanlike droid, said to his companion, "Artoo-Detoo, the Imperial starship is getting closer! We'll be destroyed for sure! This is madness! We're doomed!"





Within minutes dozens of Imperial Stormtroopers boarded the Rebel craft, firing their laser rifles. The helpless Rebel soldiers could only surrender. Through the hatch strode a black-cloaked, helmeted figure—Darth Vader, the fierce Imperial warrior. “Commander, tear this ship apart until you’ve found those plans!”

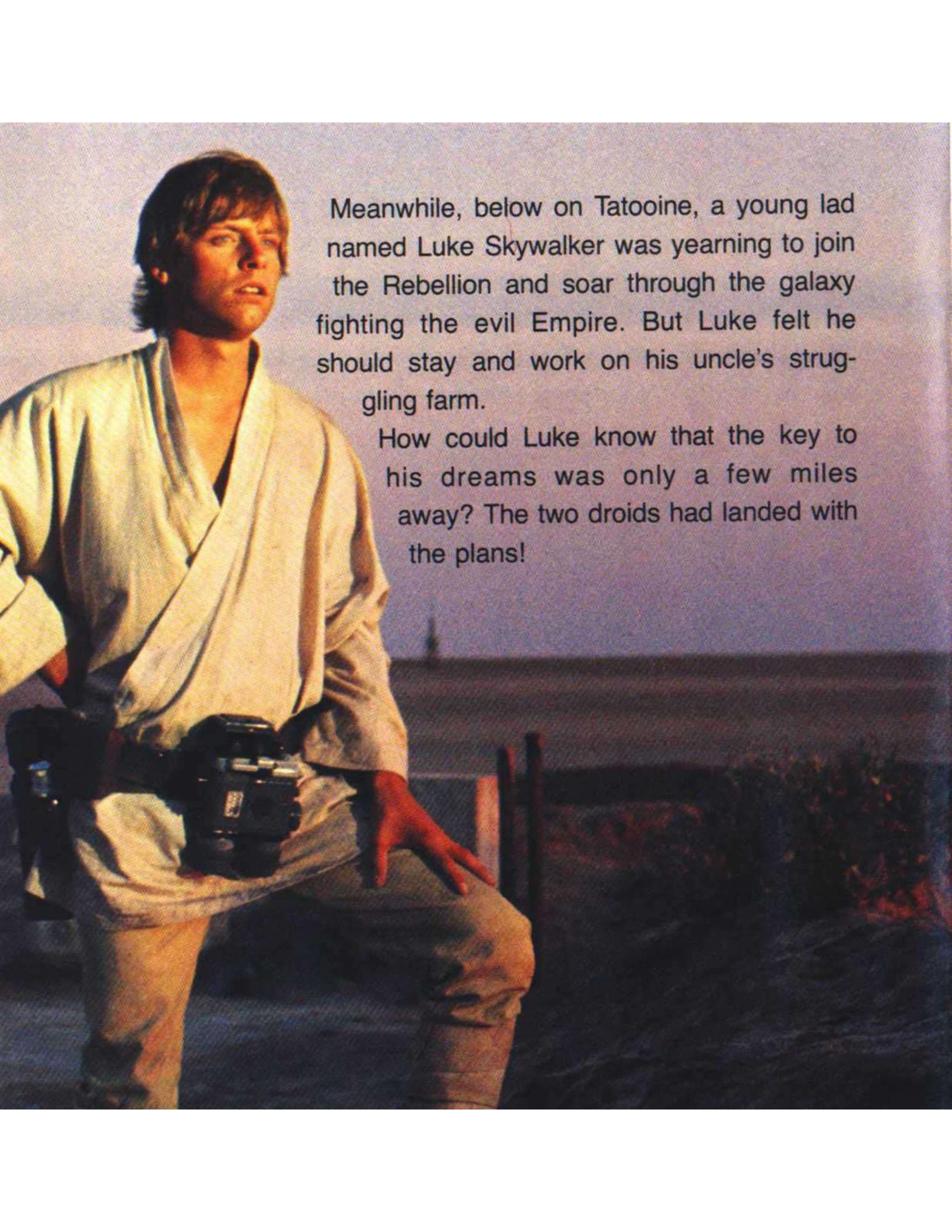


While Stormtroopers searched frantically for the stolen plans, the Rebel leader Princess Leia called Artoo-Deetoo into a deserted corridor. "Here, Artoo, I have placed the secret plans and a message in your memory banks. You and See-Threepio must take an escape pod, land on the planet of Tatooine below, and deliver the plans to Obi-Wan Kenobi. He will know what to do."

Only seconds after the two droids blasted off, Princess Leia was captured and brought before Darth Vader. "How dare you attack us, Lord Vader? We are on a diplomatic mission!"

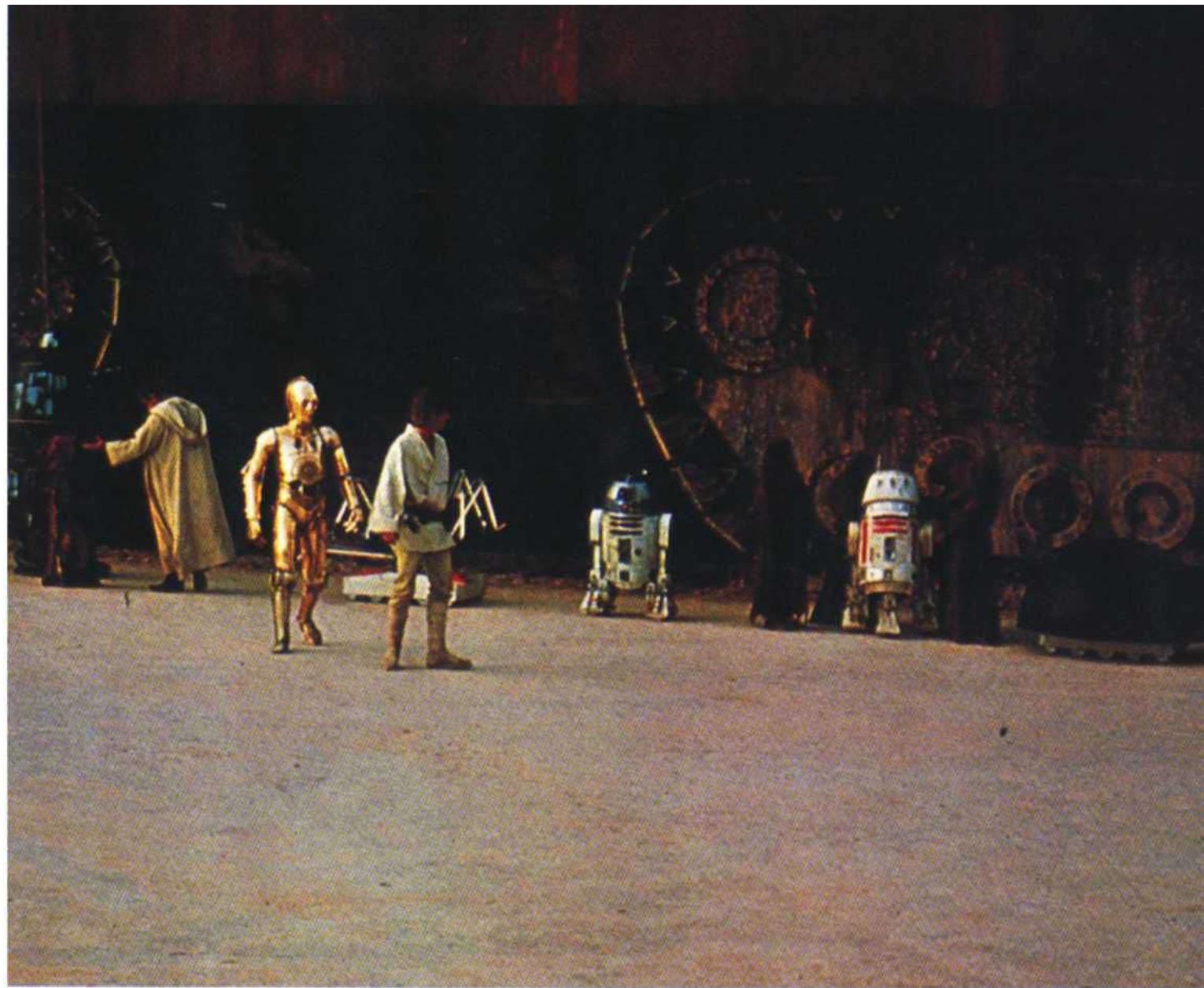
"Don't play games with me, your Highness," answered Vader. "You are a part of the Rebel Alliance. On the Death Star you will tell us where your secret base is. Come!"





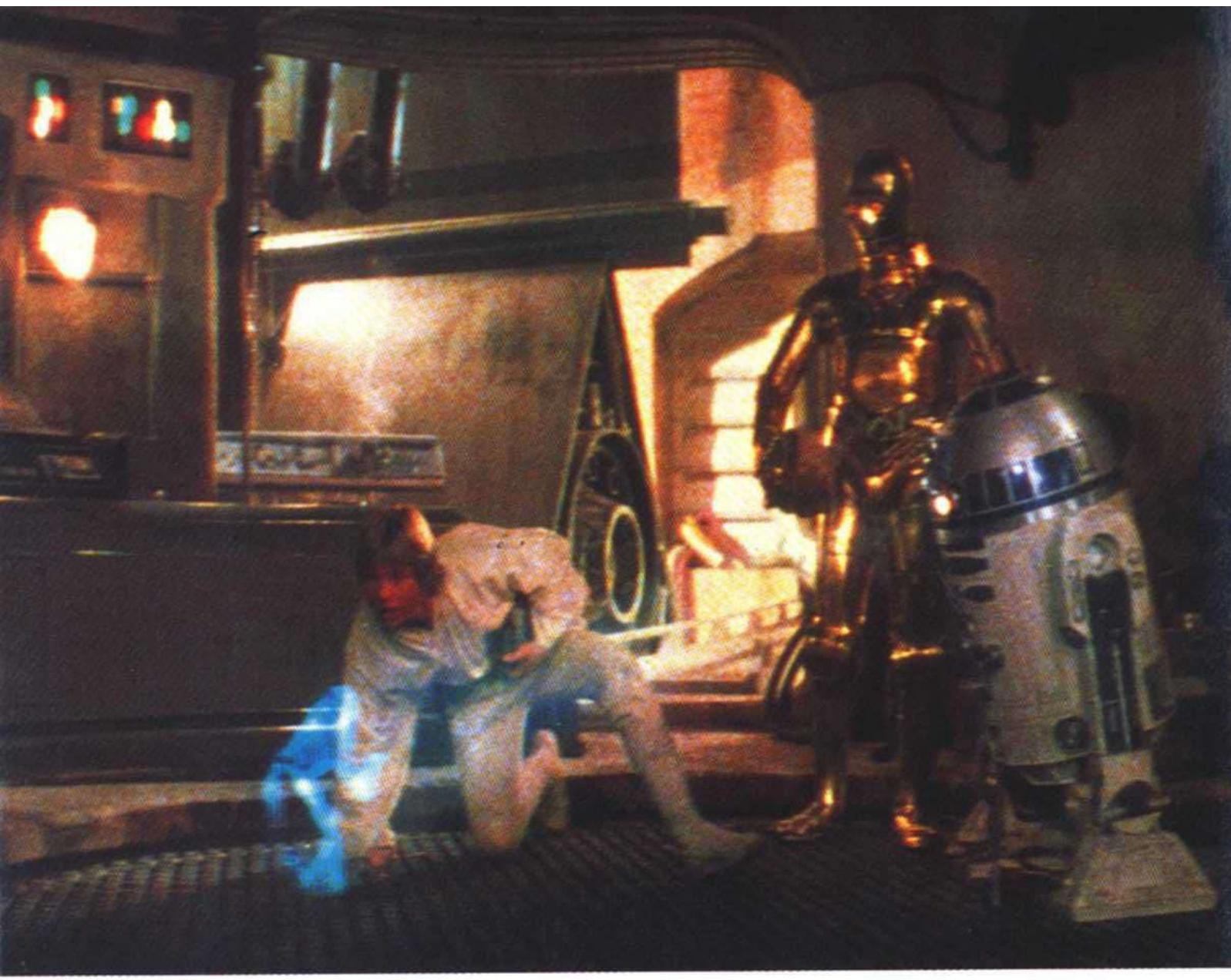
Meanwhile, below on Tatooine, a young lad named Luke Skywalker was yearning to join the Rebellion and soar through the galaxy fighting the evil Empire. But Luke felt he should stay and work on his uncle's struggling farm.

How could Luke know that the key to his dreams was only a few miles away? The two droids had landed with the plans!



Artoo and Threepio were soon picked up by Jawas, a band of small, desert scavengers. The Jawas took the droids to Luke's farm, hoping to sell them for a good price.

Luke looked the droids over. "Okay, we'll take them. Follow me, you two. I'll clean you up in the shed."



As Luke scraped the dirt off Artoo, he accidentally triggered Leia's message. Her projected image pleaded, "Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope."

Luke was puzzled. "I wonder if she means old Ben Kenobi, the desert hermit. Come on, you two. Let's go see him!"



Old Ben was full of surprises! "Yes, my boy, I was once called Obi-Wan Kenobi—back when I was a Jedi knight like your father."

"My father was a Jedi?" asked the startled youth, remembering stories about the noble knights who kept the peace before the Empire took control.

"Yes, Luke. And this was his lightsaber. I've been saving it for you." Ben handed Luke a sleek cylinder. At the touch of a button an intense beam of light shot out to form a glowing blade. "This is the weapon of the Jedi."

"Your father was killed by a treacherous pupil of mine named Darth Vader. According to the Princess's message, Vader will soon be using the Death Star to destroy Rebel planets. Luke, for the sake of your father and the Rebel Alliance, you must help me deliver these secret plans and stop Darth Vader. I will teach you how to use the Force—the power which gives the Jedi his strength and skill."



Luke eagerly agreed to help. "Very good, Luke," smiled Ben. "Now come. Stormtroopers will soon be looking for you and your droids. We must find a pilot who will take us to Princess Leia's home planet of Alderaan at once."

Their search began in a local tavern filled with strange, alien creatures.





In a dark booth Ben and Luke located a brash smuggler pilot named Han Solo. “Sure, I can get you to Alderaan, but it’ll cost you plenty. Smuggling Rebel sympathizers through Imperial blockades is no picnic.” Han’s co-pilot, Chewbacca, a shaggy, eight-foot Wookiee, roared his agreement.



Luke, Ben, and the droids boarded Han's ship, the Millennium Falcon, with Stormtroopers hot on their trail. Only Han's skill as a pilot put them safely out of the Empire's reach.

But as the Falcon neared Alderaan, Han couldn't believe his eyes! "Look! The planet's gone! It's been blown to bits!"

"This is Darth Vader's work," said Ben sadly.



Vader's huge battle station, the Death Star, was lurking nearby, and had detected the Falcon's presence. "Let's get out of here!" shouted Han. "Chewie, the controls aren't responding! We're caught in a tractor beam! It's pulling us right into the Death Star! Quick, everyone! Into this secret compartment! When we land, those Stormtroopers will think the ship's empty!"



Meanwhile, Darth Vader was questioning Princess Leia in her prison cell. "Where is the secret Rebel base?"

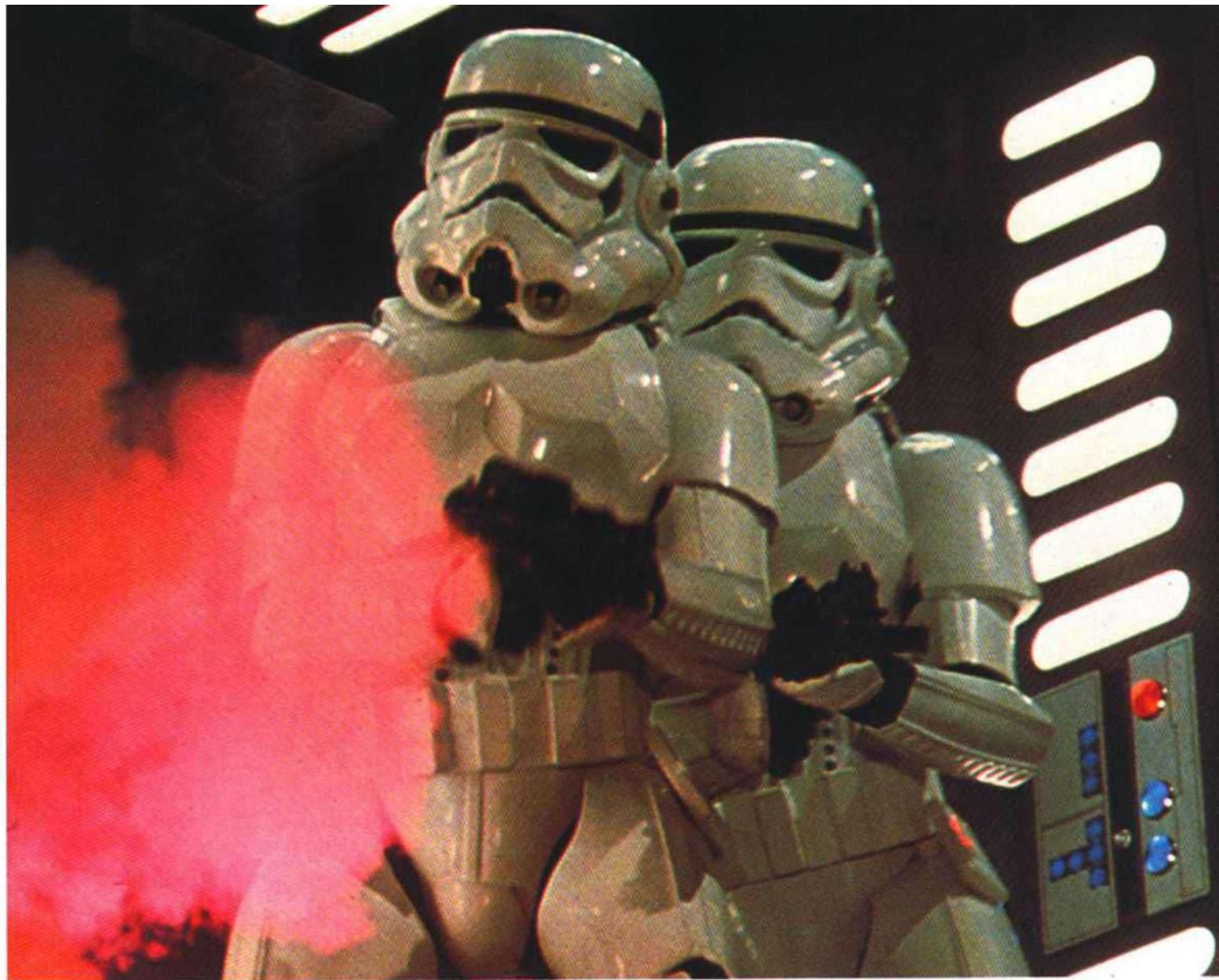
"You'll never learn that from me!" snapped Leia. "Your cruel destruction of Alderaan has only strengthened my loyalty!"

Vader angrily turned to leave, when suddenly he stopped. "I sense a tremor in the Force. There is a presence...yes! Obi-Wan Kenobi is here. I feel it!"

In the meantime, Luke, Han and Chewbacca had come out of hiding to find Princess Leia and release her. She had expected a different rescuer. "Where is Obi-Wan Kenobi?"

"He's trying to shut off a tractor beam so we can fly out of here," said Han impatiently. "Now let's move it!"





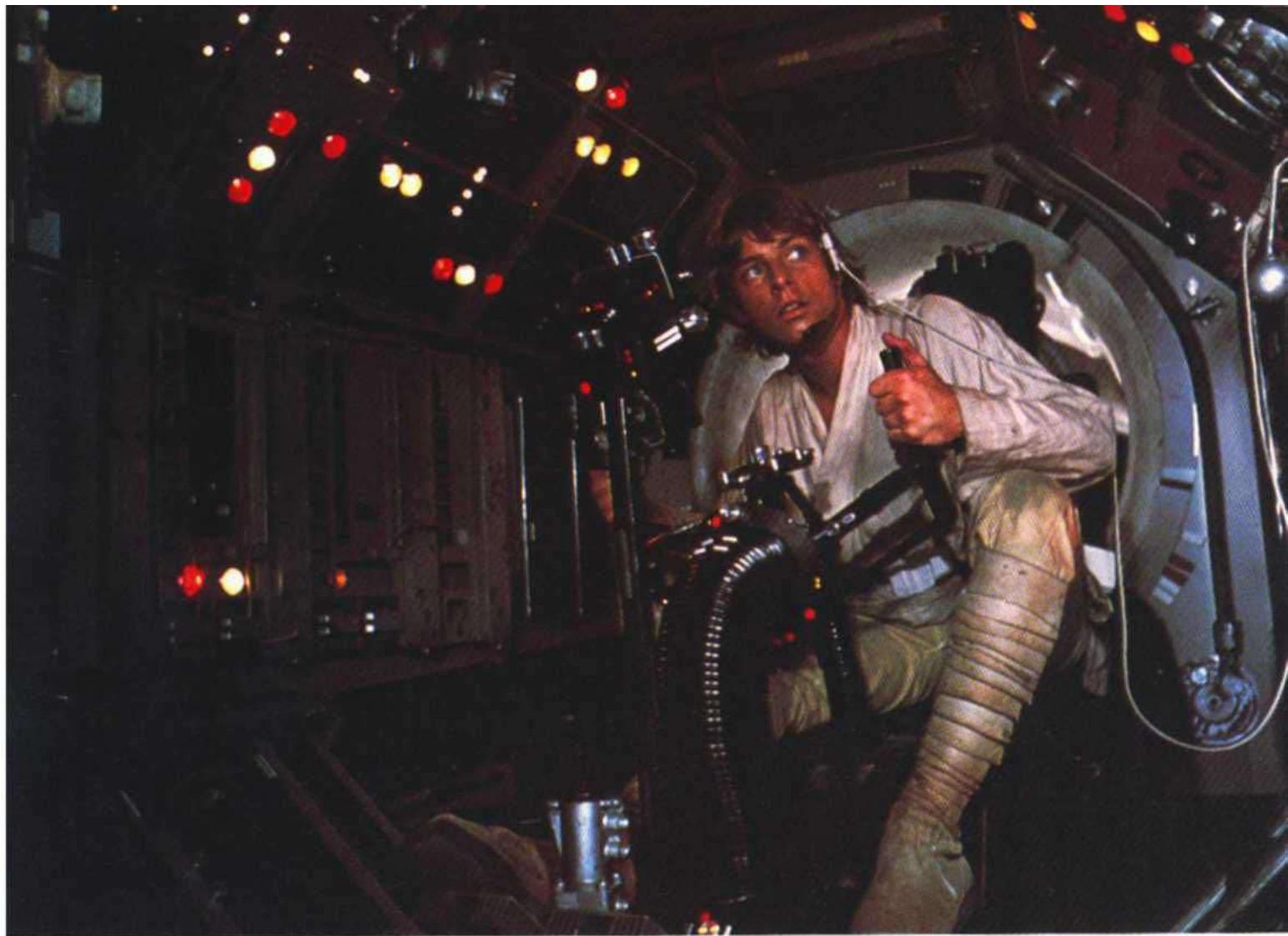
"There go the alarms!" shouted Luke. "Hurry!" Stormtroopers raced after them, filling the air with laser fire.

Luke, Han and Chewbacca fought back bravely, but they were hopelessly outnumbered. "I never bargained for this!" complained Han between blasts. "Head for the Falcon!"



Ben succeeded in shutting off the tractor beam, but his return to Han's ship was blocked by Darth Vader. "So, we meet again, Obi-Wan Kenobi. This time I will destroy you!"

"If you do, Darth, I will only grow stronger!" The two warriors lit their lightsabers. A furious battle began. The air hummed and sparks flew as lightsabers swung and clashed. Finally Darth's saber cut through Ben's cloaks! But the old Jedi was no longer there—he had vanished!



Luke and the others dashed aboard the Millennium Falcon as Han leaped to the controls. "Okay, Chewie, hit it!" Engines roared, and the Falcon shot out of the docking bay.

Han hollered to Luke, "Get to a laser cannon, kid. We've got four Imperial TIE fighters chasing us!" Luke, still stunned by Ben's disappearance, managed to fire the cannon repeatedly until he and Han had shot down all their pursuers.

Leia directed Han to the secret Rebel base where she turned over the stolen plans. After much study, the Death Star's weak spot was found—Rebel pilots had to hit an exhaust port with their proton torpedoes.

But the Rebel forces were pitifully small, compared to the might of the Imperial legions. The Rebel commander was happy to accept Luke's help, and the young warrior joined the bombing run as an X-wing pilot.





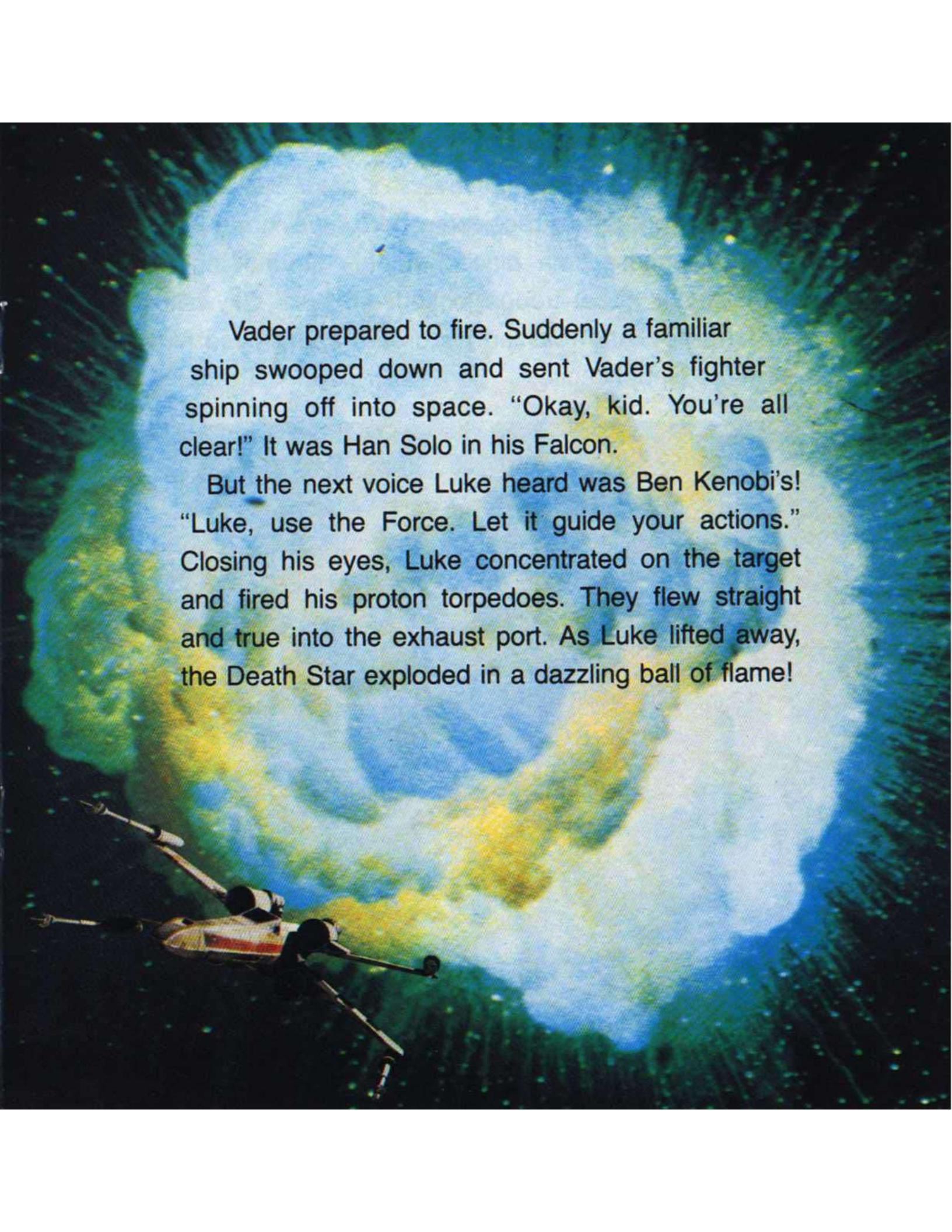
As the Rebel squadron flew toward the terrible Death Star, Luke thought, "Even if we're *not* shot at, zeroing in on that tiny target will be practically impossible!"

"Heads up!" called the Squadron leader. "TIE fighters approaching!" As the two enemies engaged, the blackness of space was lit by beams from hundreds of laser cannons!

The squadron leader spoke again. "There's the target at the end of that trench in the Death Star's surface. Begin bombing run now!" X-wings skimmed the trench time and again, but either missed the target or were shot down by TIE fighters.

As Luke zoomed down into the trench, he glanced over his shoulder. "Oh, no! It's Darth Vader! And he's right on my tail!"





Vader prepared to fire. Suddenly a familiar ship swooped down and sent Vader's fighter spinning off into space. "Okay, kid. You're all clear!" It was Han Solo in his Falcon.

But the next voice Luke heard was Ben Kenobi's! "Luke, use the Force. Let it guide your actions." Closing his eyes, Luke concentrated on the target and fired his proton torpedoes. They flew straight and true into the exhaust port. As Luke lifted away, the Death Star exploded in a dazzling ball of flame!

Luke had succeeded with Han Solo's help. Back at the Rebels' secret base, the two received a hero's welcome. In a grand ceremony, Princess Leia placed medals around their necks, while the joyful Rebel troops looked on. Luke Skywalker, the simple farm boy, had realized his dream and proved himself a leader in the Rebel cause.



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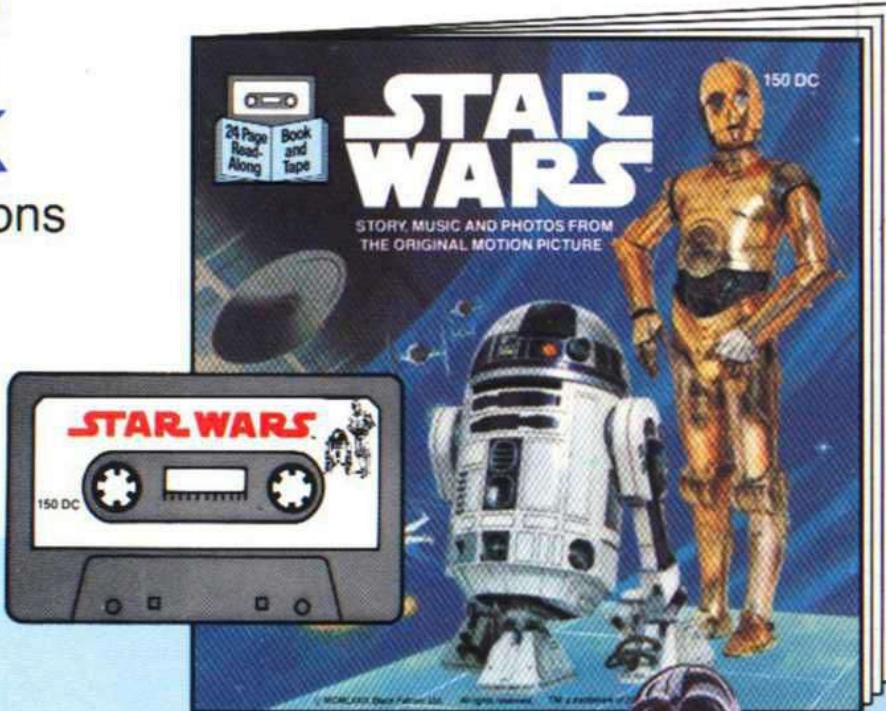
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